

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AEC-11 SCI-06 FEA-02

ACDA-19 SAM-01 DRC-01 /207 W
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R 201537Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8980

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T MOSCOW 7552

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, TECH, UR, US, IN

SUBJECT: SOVIET REACTIONS TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE GEARED TO LETTERED PARAGRAPHS
OF REFTEL:

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A. SOVIET PUBLIC TREATMENT OF INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

TO DATE HAS BEEN CONFINED TO PASS REPORT IN PRAVDA
AND OTHER CENTRAL PRESS ON MAY 19. ITEM IS BASED ON
INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT, REPORTING
THAT NUCLEAR DEVICE EXPLODED UNDERGROUND, THAT INDIAN

SCIENTISTS ARE DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY FOR EXCAVATION
PURPOSES, AND THAT INDIA DOES NOT INTEND MANUFACTURE
NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND CONDEMNS USE ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS
FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

B. WE BELIEVE USSR UNLIKELY TO REGISTER ANY SIGN
OF PUBLIC DISAPPROVAL OF INDIAN TEST AND WILL FALL BACK
ON PROFESSED PEACEFUL PURPOSES IF PRESSED FOR REACTION
IN PUBLIC FORUMS. EVEN PRIVATELY SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY
CONFINED THEMSELVES TO URGING INDIA TO STAY OUT OF
WEAPONS PRODUCTION AND TO REFRAIN FROM ATMOSPHERIC
TESTS. THE SOVIETS WILL, OF COURSE, BE PLEASED AT
INDIA'S ABILITY TO WALK A BIT TALLER VIS-A-VIS THE
CHINESE, BUT WE DOUBT THAT MOSCOW WOULD FAVOR INDIA'S
INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT OF WEAPONS TO MATCH PRC
DELIVERY CAPABILITY. FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, THE
POTENTIAL IS ALMOST AS GOOD AS THE WEAPONS THEMSELVES.

C. INDIAN CAPABILITY IS LIKELY TO HAVE LITTLE IMPACT
ON SOVIET NUCLEAR INTENTIONS, BUT THERE WILL PROBABLY
BE SOME APPREHENSION ABOUT FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE
NUCLEAR CLUB -- IN PARTICULAR, ISRAELI NUCLEAR INTEN-
TIONS. WE WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO PRESS HARDER
THAN EVER FOR GERMAN DEPOSIT OF RATIFICATION FOR NPT,
AND POSSIBLY TO URGE THE JAPANESE TO RATIFY. IT IS
DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE IMPACT ON SOVIET READINESS TO
MOVE AHEAD IN LIMITING UNDERGROUND TESTS, BUT WE WOULD
NOT EXPECT INDIA'S WISHES TO GET MUCH WEIGHT IN FINAL
SOVIET DECISION.

D. SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SEE
U.S. PLAY DISAPPROVING ROLE, PERHAPS PRIVATELY TELLING
US THAT MOSCOW IS HAPPY TO SEE US STICKING UP FOR
NON-PROLIFERATION. THE TOUGHER OUR STANCE, THE BETTER
IT WILL SERVE SOVIET INTERESTS IN SETTING PRECEDENT

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TO BE APPLIED IN EVENT OF FUTURE TESTS BY ISRAEL OR
OTHERS (AND IN COMPLICATING OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA).
WE DO NOT BELIEVE A RELATIVELY SOFT U.S. POSTURE
TOWARD INDIA WOULD RAISE ANY GREAT APPREHENSION AMONG
SOVIETS, SINCE IN NUCLEAR MATTERS THEIR OWN LEVERAGE MAY BE
GREATER THAN OUR OWN. THEY WOULD HAVE
CAUSE FOR CONCERN ONLY IN UNLIKELY EVENT THAT OUR
REACTION WERE Milder THAN THEIR OWN.

STOESSEL

NOTE BY OC/T: REFTEL REFERRED TO IN TEXT BELIEVED TO BE
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NNN

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